

# Socioeconomic tips

## New resource: ACS CodingToday

by the Division of Advocacy and Health Policy

**D**uring the summer of 2003, ACS Fellows received information about a new ACS-sponsored coding and reimbursement database, ACS CodingToday. The database was developed and is administered by Physician Reimbursement Systems (PRS), the same firm that provides the ACS Coding Hotline.

ACS CodingToday is designed to be a complete coding and billing tool for ACS Fellows. The database contains the following resources: all current *Current Procedural Terminology* codes with full descriptors; all ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes; the complete National Correct Coding Initiative (CCI) edits used by Medicare; and Medicare coding rules, including the fee schedule for each state and location, payment status of the code, modifier rules, and carrier-specific Medicare payment rules. In addition, the program offers researched advice on correct coding by code, when indicated, from the ACS's General Surgery Coding and Reimbursement Committee. Using ACS CodingToday to determine proper coding and billing rules will assist surgeons in accurate and fraud-free reporting of their services for reimbursement.

ACS CodingToday is an Internet-based program. This delivery system was chosen by PRS because the firm believes the Internet is the best way to keep the Fellows informed of rules changes in a timely fashion. All information is housed in a safe, secure Web site and is updated immediately whenever any rules change.

To access the database, Fellows and their staff should go to [www.ACSCodingToday.com](http://www.ACSCodingToday.com). PRS suggests that viewers should initially download the database tutorial posted on the initial Web page in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. Fellows should then register for a free trial period by clicking on the link, "Request a 10-day trial." At this point, viewers will follow simple registration instructions to log onto the Web site as users.

Once logged in, users will find that ACS

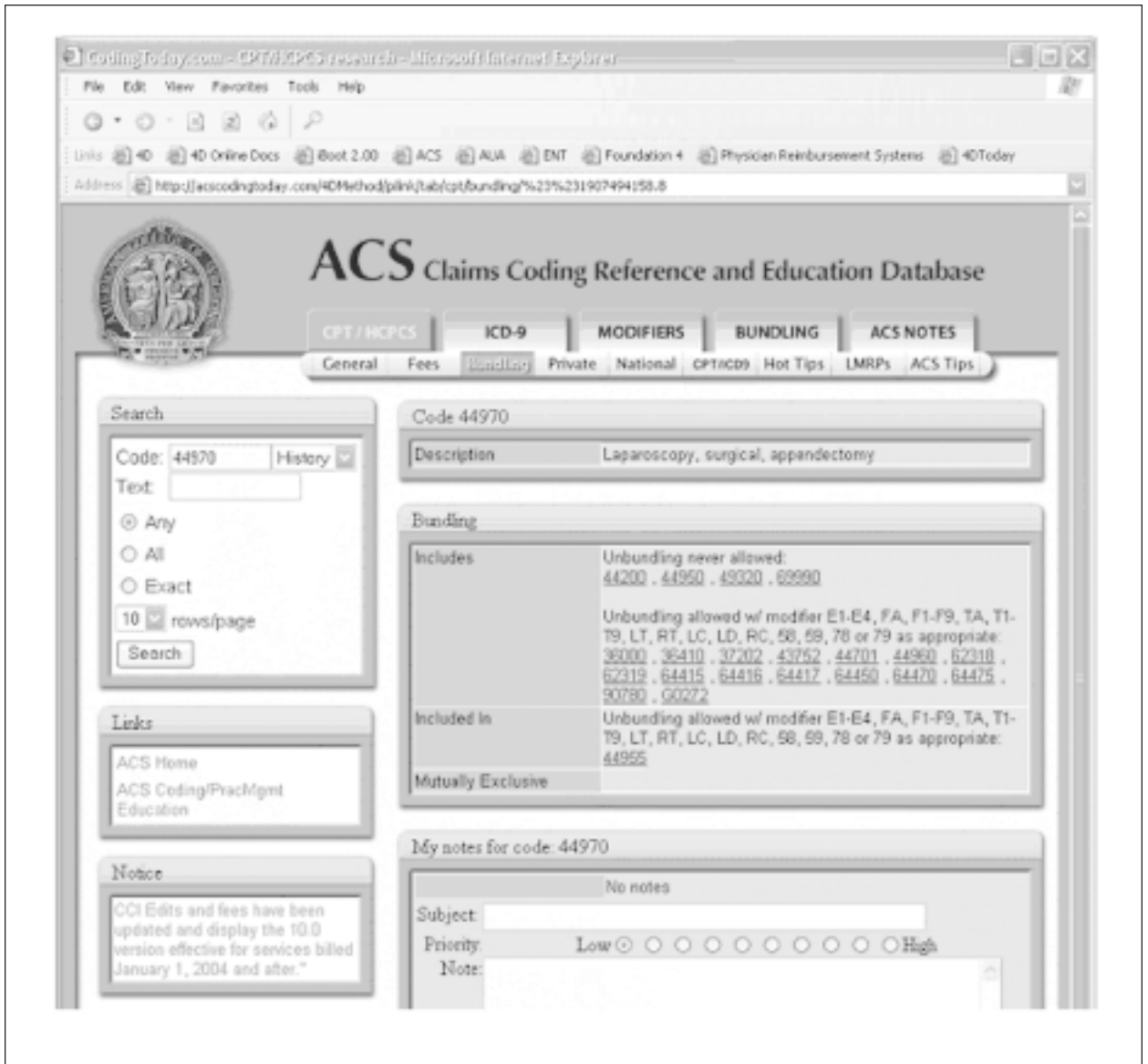
### Around the corner

- Quarterly update to 2003 Correct Coding Edits (NCCI 10.1) effective April 1.
- Economedix teleconferences are scheduled as follows: Billing Compliance: Avoiding Fraud & Abuse, April 21 and 24; Appealing Insurance Claims, May 5 and 8; and Diagnosis Coding for Surgeons...ICD-9-CM, May 19 and 22. For more information and to register, go to <http://yourmedpractice.com/ACS-Teleconference>.
- Postgraduate courses on advanced surgical coding and practice management will be presented during the ACS Spring Meeting in Boston, MA. Course descriptions and online registration can be found at <http://www.facs.org/2004springmeeting/reginfo/reginfo.html>.


CodingToday is organized under five main tabs: CPT/HCPCS, ICD-9, Modifiers, Bundling, and ACS Notes. A snapshot of the Web page that displays bundling edits for an appendectomy is featured on page 63.

In the example shown, the highlighted main tab indicates that CPT/HCPCS information is displayed. Subtabs allow you to find more specific information about the procedure. Viewers can determine the Medicare fee schedule payments for the procedure in their geographic area, whether any CCI edits are associated with the procedure, which ICD-9-CM codes are recognized for the procedure, and whether there is any Medicare or private payor guidance currently available.

The illustration shows that you are viewing the bundling page under the CPT/HCPCS tab. Each code listed under the bundling tab is in hypertext. Users can click on a code once to view the CPT definition or click twice to view further the details. In the box titled "My Notes," surgeons and their staffs may make any personal payor or coding notes pertaining to Medicare and private payors and re-



tain the notes for reference when they access the procedure code in the future.

In addition, a powerful search engine allows the user to search by partial word, partial number, or browse by topic as a reader would in the CPT book. The College anticipates that surgeons will find this new tool useful in carrying out their coding and billing activities. 

This column responds to questions from the Fellows and their staffs and provides useful tips for surgical practices. Developed by the College staff and consultants, this information will be accessible on our Web site. If you would like to see specific topics addressed in future columns, please contact the Division of Advocacy and Health Policy by fax at 202/337-4271, or e-mail [HealthPolicyAdvocacy@facs.org](mailto:HealthPolicyAdvocacy@facs.org).